

REMARKS

Claims 7, 11 and 12 are pending. By this Amendment, claim 7 is amended, and claims 1-6 and 8-10 are cancelled. The features of objected-to claim 9 and intermediate claim 8 have been placed into independent claim 7. Accordingly, no new matter is added by the above amendments.

The Office Action objected to claim 1 due to an informality therein. This objection is moot because claim 1 is cancelled.

Applicant notes with appreciation the identification of allowable subject matter in claim 9. As noted above, the features of claims 8 and 9 have been placed into independent claim 7. Accordingly, independent claim 7 and its dependent claims 11 and 12 are in condition for allowance.

Claims 1-8 and 10-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 6,364,493 to Kakuta et al. This rejection is moot in view of the amendments discussed above.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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